DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 327 957 EA 022 618

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TITLE	Attributes and Preconditions of Collaboration between and among Schools, Institutions of Higher Education, and State Education Agencies. Instructional Leadership and School Improvement.
INSTITUTION	North Central Regional Educational Lab., Elmhurst, IL.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	87
NOTE	33p.; One in a series of reports on Instructional Leadership and School Improvement.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publication Sales, North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 295 Emroy Avenue, Elmhurst, IL 60126 (Order No. ILS-711; $6.00).
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Educational Cooperation; Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Instructional Leadership; *Organizational Communication; *Organizational Effectiveness; Professional Development; Teacher Education Programs; *Teacher Improvement

ABSTRACT

Recognizing that successful collaboration among schools, institutes of higher education, and state education agencies to is an important factor in the professional development of education personnel, this document examines existing knowledge of interorganizational collaboration and identifies organizational preconditions conducive to the initiation and continuation of collaborative endeavors. Using information drawn from related literature written between 1970 and 1986, the document describes attributes of effective interorganizational collaboration such as promotive interdependence, a balanced interchange of valued commodities, a continuously renegotiated pluralistic order, continuous environmental scanning and adaptation, and a multifaceted enabling framework. The organizational preconditions identified that may increase the organizations' capacity to collaborate well include: (1) the existence of internal objectives that foster mutual goal attainment; (2) the conduct of a comprehensive assessment of valued commodities for interchange; (3) the existence of organizational values conducive to managing promotive interdependence; (4) institutionalized processes for conducting environmental scanning and strategic planning; and (5) administrative commitment, knowledge, and support. (45 references) (CLA)

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INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

ATTRIBUTES AND PRECONDITIONS OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN AND AMONG SCHOOLS, INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AND STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES

EA 022 618

ATTRIBUTES AND PRECONDITIONS OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN AND AMONG SCHOOLS, INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AND STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES

Prepared for

The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory

By

Patricia Reed and Brent Cejda

Bowling Green State University

One in a Series of Reports on
Instructional Leadership and School Improvement

1987

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295 Emroy Avenue
Elmhurst, Illinois 60126

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NCREL Order Number: ILS-711
Price: $6.00

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Preface to Series

Instructional Leadership. School Improvement. These two phrases are now common in the lexicon of education. In a large and ever-growing body of research, the concepts of instructional leadership and school improvement have been hypothesized, operationalized, measured, correlated, and analyzed. And in the actions of educators and educational policy makers, the concepts have served as goals, means to ends, explanations, and evaluation standards. Uttered by presenters and participants in countless conferences and workshops and printed in just as countless articles and book chapters, instructional leadership and school improvement have become quite prominent in the jargon of the educational reform movement of the 1980s.

But commonness and prominence are no guarantees of consensus. As concepts, instructional leadership and school improvement are elusive and multifaceted. Both phrases acquire new meanings each time they are spoken, heard, or read. Definitions have emerged, have been challenged and refined, and seem to multiply like rabbits.

Important work to codify and translate the knowledge base on instructional leadership and school improvement has been accomplished. In Leadership: Examining the Elusive, the 1987 Yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and in Rethinking School Improvement: Research, Craft, and Concept, edited by Ann Lieberman and published by Teachers College Press in 1986, significant strides were taken to dissect and synthesize information pertinent to both themes.

Though some might say the work of producing information resources on instructional leadership is done, the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory thinks otherwise; "examining" and "rethinking" are, in fact, open-ended actions. Furthermore, interest in building instructional leadership and school improvement remains high among significant and large audiences: teachers, principals, district administrators, state education agency personnel, and staff in institutions of higher education.

In response to considerable interest in instructional leadership and school improvement among constituents in the seven state region, in 1986 the Laboratory initiated activities to develop information resources. A relationship was established with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management to prepare annotated bibliographies of pertinent resources and syntheses of literature on several specific topics. The products of this relationship with ERIC/CEM launched this series of publications.

Special credit for orchestrating the development of the series is due to Stuart Smith, Associate Director and Editor of ERIC/CEM and to Dr. Lawrence Friedman, Program Associate at NCREL. To them and to the authors and reviewers of products in this series, the Laboratory extends congratulations for work well done.

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Introduction

Central to efforts to assure both quality and equality of education for all students in our nation's schools is the need for competent personnel. Thus the professional development of teachers and other educational personnel has become a major focus of the current educational reform movement and various proposals for improving upon present policies and practices have been formulated.

Local and state education agencies as well as colleges and universities are all important stakeholders in the professional development arena. Each contributes to this process. Each profits as teachers and other school personnel become increasingly knowledgeable and skillful. Each loses if they do not. Yet none of these stakeholders has the authority or the resources to undertake this task independently.

Given that schools, institutions of higher education and state education agencies are involved in the professional development of educational personnel, it is not surprising that many of the reform proposals emphasize the need for these stakeholders to collaborate. However, what is thought to be essential has not been easily translated into practice. Instead, relationships between these three constituencies often continue to be more adversarial than complementary.

That collaboration remains the exception rather than the rule is attributable to many factors. Cultural, economic, and political barriers as well as structural and technical problems associated with inter-organizational collaboration provide greater impetus for unilateral rather than joint endeavors. Yet collaboration between schools, institutions of higher education, and state education agencies can and does occur. Furthermore, there is now a growing body of literature which can provide educators greater insight into the nature of collaborative relationships.

What has not been determined, however, is whether emerging from this increased attention upon educational collaboration are any common findings regarding the characteristics of true inter-organizational collaboration. Yet if there are certain attributes which characterize successful collaboration, such information could be useful to those organizations that are attempting to develop such relationships. Furthermore, knowledge of the attributes of inter-organizational collaboration may lead to the

identification of organizational preconditions that increase the probability that collaborative endeavors are initiated and sustained.

Only when there is greater awareness of the attributes of collaboration and of the organizational preconditions that foster collaboration are true partnerships between schools, institutions of higher education, and state education agencies likely to result. Only then will the professional development of school personnel actually be facilitated through such efforts.

Methodology

To ascertain those fundamental attributes which characterize relationships between schools, institutions of higher education, and/or state education agencies that are truly collaborative and determine organizational preconditions which increase the probability of collaboration, a comprehensive review of the literature was conducted.

This review involved identification and analysis of publications (i.e., journal articles, monographs, project reports, and papers presented at national or regional conferences) which (1) focused upon collaboration between schools, colleges or universities, and/or state education agencies and (2) described conditions which impede collaboration, elements deemed essential to collaboration, principles of collaboration, and/or organizational preconditions which facilitate collaboration. The literature search was limited to the years 1970 through 1986 (October).

The search yielded 106 sources which were initially thought to be relevant for purposes of the investigation. These 106 sources were reviewed in their entirety but only forty-five were found to meet the established criteria. The remaining sources either (1) described endeavors that did not exemplify inter-organizational collaboration or (2) did not specify restricting conditions, essential elements, principles, or preconditions of collaboration.

An annotated bibliography of each of the forty-five sources was then completed. Annotations for each source included all restricting conditions, essential elements, principals, and preconditions identified in that source.[1] Following this, the findings were summarized by excerpting from the bibliography each of the restricting conditions, essential elements, principals, and preconditions and compiling these within the appropriate category.

Findings were then analyzed to determine if the composite of conditions, elements, and principals indicated the existence of common attributes. After the identification of

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1/ This bibliography is published as a separate document, Collaboration Between and Among Schools, Institutions of Higher Education, and State Education Agencies: An Annotated Bibliography, NCREL, 1987.

attributes was completed, organizational preconditions which appear to be conducive to development of these attributes were derived using the data excerpted from the literature relating to preconditions and also considering the previously arrived at conclusions regarding essential attributes.

Conclusions

As can be seen from even a cursory examination of the annotated bibliography, a broad array of conditions which restrict collaboration are identified in the literature reviewed. Many discrete and at first seemingly disparate elements are also mentioned as being essential to true inter-organizational collaboration. Furthermore, although reflecting recognition of certain of these restricting conditions and elements, the principles generated illustrate no general consensus as to the nature of true organizational partnerships.

However, when the conditions, elements, and principles are considered collectively, certain commonalities and patterns can be discerned. These commonalities and patterns are discussed in the following sections and conclusions regarding those basic attributes that characterize inter-organizational collaboration are presented.

Attributes of Collaboration

Promotive Interdependence Many of the sources reviewed call particular attention to the interdependence of schools, institutions of higher education, and state education agencies (Beder, 1984; Boyer, 1981; DeBevoise, 1986; Maeroff, 1983; Mills, 1984; Ogle, 1983; Pugach and Allen-Meares, 1985; Smith, 1985; Sparks, et al., 1985; Wilbur, 1984; Wu, 1986). Thus a frequently reiterated assumption is that an essential element of collaboration is the realization by two or more organizations that they have common needs and goals (Boyer, 1981; Mills, 1984; O'Keefe, 1981; Pugach and Allen-Meares, 1985; Smith, 1985; Sparks, et al., 1985; Wilbur, 1984; Wu, 1986). Yet Maloy (1985) as well as others (Collins, 1983; Durden, 1985; Fox, et al., 1986; Gallegos, 1980; Hawley and Branch, 1978; Little, 1984a; Metzner, 1981; Nadler and Merren, 1980; Weaver, 1979) consider inter-organizational collaboration to be characterized by multiple, rather than mutual, realities and the reasons for, as well as the benefits of, collaboration to differ. Maloy thus concludes that the avenue to collaborative success is not the realization of a reason for working together to achieve similar goals but rather the identification of ways of working together to achieve diverse goals.

At first these may seem to be conflicting views -- one positing the existence of similar needs and goals as an underlying characteristic of collaboration, the other positing the

existence of diverse goals but the identification of common means for their achievement. Upon further consideration, however, it can be seen that both point to a common attribute, interdependence.

What has not been explicitly noted in discussions of the elements of collaboration but is made quite explicit in discussion of the barriers to collaboration, is that interdependence does not necessarily foster collaboration. As organizational theorists have noted, interdependence is associated with both collaboration and competition.[2] But as Deutsch observed in analyzing objectives linkages between organizations, interdependence is of two types. When organizational participants are so linked that there is a negative correlation between their goal attainments (that is, one's gain is another's loss), such conditions constitute contrient interdependence. It is this type of interdependence which engenders competition. Conversely, when objectives linkages are such that there is a positive correlation between participants' goal attainments (that is, one's gain is the other's gain), such linkages constitute promotive interdependence.[3] It is this latter type of interdependence which appears to be the underlying attribute alluded to in the sources reviewed.

The existence of promotive interdependence -- that is, positive correlations between goal attainments on the part of each organization as well as its organizational actors -- thus appears to be essential if schools, institutions of higher education, and/or state education agencies are to collaborate. However, as many of the sources indicate, objectives linkages that foster such interdependence are difficult to effect (Boyer, 1981; Collins, 1983; Durden, 1985; Gallegos, 1980; Hohman, 1985; Hough, 1975; Hurwitz, et al., 1975; Lieberman, 1985; Metzner, 1970; Nadler and Merron, 1980; Pugach and Allen-Meares, 1985; Schaffer, et al., 1983; Yarger, 1979). For true collaboration to occur, the goals or tasks performed by individuals in one organization must be integrally linked to the goals or tasks within another. Tasks must be designed in such a way that their successful completion requires interaction. Furthermore, goal attainment by one organization must be contingent upon goal attainment by the other. Only when such

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2/ Kraus, W. A. (1980). Collaboration in Organizations: Alternatives to Hierarchy. New York: Human Sciences Press.

3/ Deutsch, M. (1973). The Resolution of Conflict. New Haven: Yale University Press.

conditions exist can the contrient interdependence which characterizes many inter-organizational relationships be replaced by promotive interdependence.

Balanced Interchange of Valued Commodities While promotive interdependence appears to be a basic attribute of collaboration, it is not sufficient in and of itself to characterize true collaboration. For if two or more organizations are to collaborate, each must have commodities it is willing and able to exchange for commodities it needs and the other has and is also willing and able to exchange. Beder (1984) describes this aspect of collaboration very succinctly when he observes that for collaboration to flourish, the parties to it must tangibly benefit, and the key to benefit lies in a reciprocal relationship where both partners exchange resources valued less for resources valued more.

The cruciality of having commodities that are valued by another organization as well as of working out ways of trading these needed commodities through an equitable standard of exchange is mentioned again and again in the discussions of barriers to as well as elements of collaboration (Gabrys, 1981; Hohman, 1985; Jones and Barnes, 1984; Little, 1984b; Ogle, 1983; Schaffer, et al., 1983; Shive, 1984; Smith, 1975; Sparks, et al., 1985; Wheeler and Ellerman, 1982). Often, however, it is only the more tangible resources such as facilities, funding, materials, services, or time that are explicitly recognized as mediums of exchange. Yet less tangible commodities are often mentioned in discussions of interactions between organizations. These include qualitative contributions such as commitment, esteem, expertise, honesty, flexibility, respect, status, tolerance of ambiguity, and trust (Beder, 1984; Binko and Neuberg, 1984; Carpenter and Mahlios, 1982; Collins, 1983; Gabrys, 1981; Lieberman, 1985; Little, 1984a; Mills, 1984; Nadler and Merron, 1980; Ogle, 1983; Pugach and Allen-Meares, 1985; Schaffer, et al., 1983; Wu, 1986). Typically qualitative resources are regarded as discrete elements of collaboration rather than as commodities to be exchanged. But it is failure on the part of organizational participants to contribute these types of commodities that is often cited as a major barrier to collaboration.

There is common acceptance that an interchange of commodities is an essential aspect of collaboration. But, more importantly, this interchange must be balanced. Many efforts at collaboration fail because potential collaborators find they have few if any commodities that are of value to each other. Often proponents of collaboration fail to realize that the commodities they wish to exchange have such a high value or are so

scarce within organizations that organizational actors will not agree to their exchange. Frequently organizations discover that the commodities they are actually receiving are neither what they need nor want. In the latter case, these are often qualitative commodities such as apathy, low regard, incompetency, dishonesty, rigidity, ineffectuality, disrespect, prejudice, suspicion.

Values placed upon particular commodities by each organization and its organizational actors thus need to be carefully examined so that any ensuing interchange is supportive of rather than detrimental to mutual goal attainment on the part of each organization and its actors. Given the variations which commonly exist between the worth attached to various commodities by schools as compared to colleges or universities and state education agencies, as well as the value differentiations that exist within these organizations among units and individuals, it can be seen that attaining a balanced interchange is extremely difficult.

A Renegotiated Pluralistic Order A third frequently mentioned element of collaboration is typically labeled bilateral or shared decision-making (Binko and Neuberg, 1984; Carpenter and Mahlios, 1982; Gabrys, 1981; Hough, 1975; Michigan State Department of Education, 1977; Schaffer, et al., 1983). Conversely, concerns for protection of turf, autonomy, control and power are repeatedly cited as major barriers to collaboration (Collins, 1983; Fox, et al., 1986; Gallegos, 1980; Jones and Barnes, 1984; Little, 1984a; Nadler and Merron, 1980; Pugach and Allen-Meares, 1985; Sussman, 1983; Weaver, 1979).

That shared decision-making is a fundamental aspect of inter-organizational collaboration is also a conclusion reached by many organizational theorists.[4] Yet as Vroom and Yetton's analysis of decision-making seems to indicate, deciding is easy. It is implementation that is difficult when the involvement of others is necessary to carry

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4/ See, for example: Schermerhorn, J. R. (1974). Determinants of interorganizational cooperation. Working Paper Number 93, Graduate School of Business Administration, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA; Thompson, J. D. and McEqen, W. J. (1958). Organizational goals and environment: Goal-setting as an interaction process. American Sociological Review, 23, 23-31; Vroom, V. H. and Yetton, P. W. (1973). Leadership and Decision Making. Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press.

out decisions in an organizational context.[5] It is not surprising, therefore, that in many of the sources reviewed, administrative support and leadership as well as widespread support and participation of individuals at all organizational levels are frequently noted as being essential to inter-organizational collaboration (Binko and Neuberg, 1984; DeBevoise, 1986; Little, 1984a; Lutkus, 1985; Metzner, 1970; Michigan State Department of Education, 1977; Mills, 1984; Ogle, 1983; Smith, 1975; Sussman, 1982; Van Voorhees, 1984; Weaver, 1979; Wu, 1986).

But neither shared decision-making nor widespread support and involvement fully identify the third attribute of collaboration. Rather, these elements imply a dimension of this attribute, pluralism. That is, in collaborative endeavors there seems to be a realization that both the individual and the collective (organization) must be understood and responded to in terms of their dependency and influence on each other. This recognition of pluralism allows for thinking in a unified perspective as well as in ways that facilitate examination of the component parts of the process. It acknowledges the need for mutual accommodation of all legitimate interests.[6] This pluralistic aspect of collaboration is further illustrated in identification of such elements as: a sense of organizational evolution (Carpenter and Mahlios, 1982), a perception of how each component is involved (DeBevoise, 1986; Hurwitz, et al., 1975), a transcending of self-interests and understanding and mutual respect for different contributions (Pugach and Allen-Meares, 1985), shared agreement on program ideas, nature of roles and relationships, work, and problem-solving (Little, 1984a), a grass-roots character (Lutkus, 1985), and co-ownership (Shive, 1984; Wilbur, 1984).

However, more than just acceptance of pluralism seems to be implied in discussions of the various elements noted above. Also suggested is what Trist describes as the need to develop the capability to manage interdependence through cooperative rather than competitive relations, to establish structures and processes which result in a negotiated

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5/ Vroom, V. H. and Yetton, P. W. (1973). Leadership and Decision Making. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

6/ Kraus, op cit., pp. 130-131.

order based on mutual accommodation of legitimate interests.[7] In a more recent analysis of this capability to manage interdependence, Kraus refers to these cooperative structures and processes as "renegotiated" order.[8] He does so to call attention to the fact that collaboration entails a continuous process of renegotiation and reformulation between individuals, groups, and the larger context within which these entities operate. That this renegotiation and reformulation is necessary for inter-organizational collaboration is indicated not only by the elements just discussed but in numerous other elements identified in the sources reviewed. These include: compromise (Hurwitz, et al., 1985), collegiality (Roper and Nolan, 1977), time to bridge cultures (Lieberman, 1985), development of a common language (DeBevoise, 1986; Mergendoller, 1981), collaboration as a maturing process (Sussman, 1982), frequent contacts between persons from different organizational settings (Mills, 1984; Van Voorhees, 1984), organic development (Vivian, 1985), and negotiation of vested interest and conflicting need (Weaver, 1979).

Continuous Environmental Scanning and Adaptation A fourth essential attribute of collaboration between schools, institutions of higher education and/or state education agencies is perhaps more clearly exemplified by many of the factors cited as impeding collaboration than by elements noted as essential to collaboration. For example, it is evident that collaboration can disrupt existing governance mechanisms (Yarger, 1979), violate traditional staffing and reward systems (Fox, et al., 1986; Nadler and Merron, 1980), call for practices for which individuals are not prepared (Little, 1984b), threaten turf (Hohman, 1985; Pugach and Allen-Meares, 1985), and place in question formal and informal rules of organizations (Sussman, 1982). Collaboration may also call for a significant reallocation of funds and other resources (Hough, 1975; Hurwitz, 1985; Little, 1984b; Mills, 1984; Neale, 1977; Ogle, 1983; Schaffer, et al., 1983; Sussman, 1982; Weaver, 1979; Wheeler and Ellerman, 1982). Inter-organizational endeavors may thus be perceived as dysfunctional in terms of an organization's ability to maintain other programs and activities deemed essential to its overall mission (Fox, et al., 1986; Jones and Barnes, 1984; Hadler and Merron, 1980; Sussman, 1982; Weaver, 1979).

7/ Trist, E. (1976). Toward a postindustrial culture. In M. Dunnette, Ed., Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1011-1033.

8/ Kraus, op cit., 189-190.

In addition to these internal organizational conditions which create barriers to collaboration, external events such as loss of funding (Ogle, 1983), changing state and regional incentives (Gallegos, 1980), emerging trends (Hohman, 1985), and shifts in the structure of power and policy (Little, 1984b) also influence inter-organizational relationships. Problems brought about by changes in the external environment can distort the intent of collaboration or prevent full realization of the benefits anticipated (Gallegos, 1980).

Because of these internal and external barriers, many of the sources reviewed note that collaborators need to have realistic expectations (DeBevoise, 1986), be able to anticipate problems (Jones and Barnes, 1984; Mills, 1984; Wilbur, 1984), identify the advantages and limitations of participation (Weaver, 1979), take into consideration operational and programmatic differences between organizations (Mills, 1984), and consider the many factors that pose threats and opportunities for joint endeavors (Schaffer, et al., 1983).

What is made clear by discussions of these organizational and environmental factors and related elements is the importance of the milieux in which collaboration takes place. This milieux includes not just the context of each organization but also the environment within which the organizations are embedded. Therefore, if schools, institutions of higher education, and/or state education agencies are to be able to sustain joint endeavors, a fourth attribute must be present -- continuous environmental scanning and adaptation. It is this attribute which makes it possible for collaborators to determine conditions, events, issues, and trends which may have a significant impact upon planned or ongoing partnerships. Through continuous monitoring of the environment in which collaboration takes place, collaborators may be able to make adaptations to cope with or overcome restrictive circumstances and conditions. They can also identify changing circumstances or conditions that pose opportunities for new partnerships or for strengthening established partnerships.

Interestingly, this attribute is not explicitly referred to in any of the descriptions of the various collaborative programs or projects presented in the literature. No formal structures or processes for assuring continuous scanning are mentioned. In successful collaborative endeavors, it therefore seems that environmental scanning and adaptation occurred without being recognized as such.

A Multi-faceted Enablement Framework Collaboration between schools, institutions of higher education and/or state departments of education does not occur naturally. As noted in discussion of the previous attributes, collaboration engenders conflict and may be considered dysfunctional in terms of an organization's ability to maintain a steady state or equilibrium. Inter-organizational collaboration also calls for structures and processes which are based upon different assumptions and values than those which typically underly hierarchical organizations. Thus for collaboration to be initiated and sustained, an effective enabling framework is essential.

Many of the sources reviewed indicate that one important facet of an effective enabling framework is the commitment of a cadre of organizational actors (Beder, 1984; Carpenter and Mahlios, 1982; Dillon, 1974; Little, 1984a; Miller, 1984; Pugach and Allen-Meares, 1985; Vivian, 1985; Wheeler and Ellerman, 1982; Wilbur, 1984). DeBevoise (1986) refers to these individuals as a community of believers who are willing to accept the risks and potential costs of collaboration. But perhaps more importantly, it is also noted that leadership, or at least support and cooperation, on the part of the highest level of administration in each organization is absolutely essential if inter-organizational collaboration is to be successful (DeBevoise, 1986; Gabrys, 1982; Lieberman, 1985; Smith, 1975; Wilbur, 1984). Moreover, Lieberman (1985) draws attention to the need to give the collaborative a position of priority where it has a real voice in the operational framework of each organization.

But the existence of a cadre of individuals who believe in collaboration, including the commitment and support of top level administrators, is not sufficient in and of itself to constitute an effective enabling network. Also critical are linkages which provide for ongoing communication within and between organizations (DeBevoise, 1986; Binko and Neuberg, 1984; Fox, et al., 1986; Hurwitz, et al., 1985; Van Voorhees, 1985; Weaver, 1979; Wu, 1978). Hohman (1985) refers to these linkages as the "who, when, and how" of concrete communication. Particularly important in establishing and maintaining these linkages appear to be "boundary spanners," specific individuals designated by organizations to represent them in inter-organizational relationships, facilitate the exchange of information, and promote the development of objectives linkages that lead to mutual goal attainment through the matching of needs and commodities (DeBevoise, 1986; Fox, et al., 1986; Hohman, 1985; Wu, 1979). Hohman (1985) indicates that boundary spanners can affect the outcomes of inter-organizational relationships in significant ways through their interpretation of ideas and their influence over opinion

leaders. She thus concludes that the choice of these organizational representatives is a critical one. She draws attention to the fact that organizations often select representatives on the basis of a perceived need to protect their domains and resultantly collaboration is not facilitated. When boundary spanners are selected on the basis of their ability to perform as change agents who bring ideas from outside their organizations, evaluate and interpret new ideas, and introduce them to individuals and groups, joint endeavors are more likely to succeed.

A third facet frequently identified as essential in an enabling framework is funding (Jones and Barnes, 1984; Lieberman, 1985; Sparks, 1985; Schaffer, et al., 1983; Van Voorhees, 1984).[9] While it may be desirable to secure resources that are different from those currently used to support other organizational endeavors (Shive, 1984) and limit collaborative endeavors to those that do not require a significant outlay of institutional funds (Hurwitz, 1979), reliance upon external funding is widely regarded as detrimental (Hurwitz, et al., 1975; Little, 1984b; Neale, 1977; Ogle, 1983). Furthermore many sources assert that financial support must come from each partner (Binko and Neubert, 1984; Schaffer, et al., 1983; Vivian, 1985). But despite differences with respect to how funding should be secured, there is general agreement that if funding is lacking or withdrawn, collaboration is threatened.

A final facet of the enabling framework is more often treated as a product of collaboration than as an enabling factor. This facet is the presence of effective delivery modes for achieving the specific purposes of inter-organizational collaboration. Where these goals involve the professional development of school personnel, several principles clearly emerge regarding the nature of such modes. First, there is general consensus that close and continuous involvement of teachers as well as building level administrators in the planning as well as the implementation and evaluation of professional development activities is essential (Fox, et al., 1986; Gabrys, 1981; Little, 1984b; Mergendoller, 1981; Metzner, 1970; Ogle, 1983; Roper, 1977; Schaffer, et al., 1983; Smith, 1975; Van Voorhees, 1984; Vivian, 1985). Additionally there is considerable

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9/ Funding was discussed earlier as being one of the tangible resources that may be involved in the interchange of commodities which occurs as part of collaboration. However, because funding is so often regarded as vital to sustain collaborative activities, it is also discussed here in terms of its importance to developing an effective enabling framework.

evidence which indicates that unless professional development delivery modes include application or follow-up in ongoing programs, their effectiveness will be minimal (Binko and Neubert, 1984; Fox, et al., 1986; Gabrys, 1981; Little, 1984a; Little, 1984b; Mergendollar, 1981; Ogle, 1983; O'Keefe, 1981; Roper, 1977; Smith, 1985; Sparks, 1985; Van Voorhees, 1984; Vivian, 1985). Frequently mentioned also is that ample time be allowed for both planning and implementation if there are to be measurable results (Lieberman, 1985; Little, 1984b; Mills, 1984; Ogle, 1983; Shive, 1984; Vivian, 1985), programs need to be sharply focused (Boyer, 1981; Hurwitz, et al., 1975; Lieberman, 1985; Little, 1984b; Maeroff, 1983; Ogle, 1983; Smith, 1975; Sparks, et al., 1985; Vivian, 1985), and persons serving as facilitators must be competent and acceptable to each of the participating organizations (Gabrys, 1981; Mills, 1984; Nadler and Merron, 1980; Sparks, et al., 1985; Van Voorhees, 1984). Further indicated is that professional development delivery modes must be designed to ensure that conditions under which participants from each organization must work are acceptable (Wu, 1986), roles, responsibilities and expectations for various participants must be clear (Shieve, 1984; Wilbur, 1984; Wu, 1986), and activities must complement ongoing programs (Smith, 1985) and meet specific needs or concerns of the involved parties (DeBoise, 1986; Mills, 1984; Smith, 1975).

Overall, however, delivery modes which enable the purposes of collaboration may entail a continuum of connecting relationships of both a formal and informal nature between organizational participants (DeBevoise, 1986; Roper, 1977). They may focus upon various aspects of education such as curriculum development, instruction, organizational and staff development, or research (Carpenter and Mahlios, 1982; Fox, et al., 1986; Gabrys, 1981; Little, 1981a; Little, 1984b; Ogle, 1983; Wheeler and Ellerman, 1982).

The fifth attribute of collaboration is thus a multi-faceted enabling framework which includes but may not be limited to: (1) a committed cadre of organizational actors including top-level administrators of each organization; (2) mechanisms for assuring inter-organizational communication, including the use of boundary spanners; (3) adequate and stable funding; and (4) a continuum of delivery modes appropriate to achieving the particular purposes of the collaborative endeavor.

Organizational Preconditions that Facilitate Collaboration

Although replete with descriptions of organizational variables that impede collaboration, few of the sources reveiwed made direct reference to organizational preconditions which increase an organization's capacity to develop and maintain collaborative relationships.

Hohman (1985) did note that while an organization may be more inclined to interact with other organizations as a result of environmental changes, moving from a general interest to a particular collaboration requires additional impetus from organizational determinants ... that is, factors which make a specific organization form specific commitments. She concludes that three of these important determinants are domain consensus (retaining "territorial" rights), perception of gain (on the part of each organization), and possession of sufficient resources (resources not critical to the organization's survival). In identifying the elements of collaboration, a number of sources also point to a fourth important determinant: a cadre of individuals and particularly top-level administrators who believe in and are willing to accept the risks and costs of collaboration (Beder, 1984; Carpenter and Mahlios, 1982; DeBevoise, 1986; Dillon, 1974; Gabrys, 1981; Lieberman, 1985; Little, 1984a; Miller, 1984; Pugach and Allen-Meares, 1985; Vivian, 1975; Wheeler and Ellerman, 1982; Wilbur, 1984).

In discussing the critical role of political and organizational realities in the development of inter-organizational relationships, Collins (1983) proposes that incorporating within program evaluations questions pertaining to proceeding in certain directions will facilitate collaboration by uncovering organizational participants' hidden agendas, illuminating the complexity of inter-organizational operations, and suggesting strategies which can facilitate such operations. He also points to the need for organizations to examine their own cultures to determine the convergence or divergence that is likely to characterize any joint endeavors. He hypothesizes that for organizations that are culturally convergent, the potential for collaboration is greater than for those which are culturally diverse.

Both Dillon (1974) and Weaver (1979) agree that prior to entering into any inter-organizational endeavors, it is important for an organization to determine the particular areas of responsibility for which it is best qualified to render service as well as to consider the advantages and limitations of collaboration as it relates to its missions and talents.

Finally, Beder (1984) indicates that organizations that have more permeable boundaries and fluid, flexible structures will be more successful in developing partnerships.

There is thus some recognition in the literature that organizations differ in their capacity to collaborate and that certain organizational preconditions may increase the probability that an organization will be successful in developing collaborative relationships. But since very little direct attention has been given to this aspect of collaboration, no patterns or commonalities have as yet emerged.

Nonetheless, when the attributes of collaboration discussed in the previous section are also considered as a basis for determining preconditions, some tentative conclusions seem to be warranted.

Organizational Objectives Linkages That Foster Mutual Goal Attainment Since inter-organizational collaboration is characterized by promotive rather than contrient interdependence, it seems reasonable to conclude that when internal objectives linkages of an organization foster positive rather than negative correlations between goal attainments of individuals and units, the potential for collaboration will be increased.

In organizations characterized by such linkages, success in task completion demands interaction with others and the success of one unit is linked to the success of another. Thus it is not assumed that certain functions are inherently more important and thus both scarce and of a higher order. Rather a variety of functions are viewed as critical to organizational effectiveness. These functions are not scarce but are dispersed throughout the organization thus making the organizational structure more horizontal than vertical since it reflects functional differentiation instead of authority differentiation. Differences between units and functions are less clear than in hierarchicial organizations where status, power, and authority flow from the top down. Competition between individuals and units is not reinforced and there is less need for either individuals or units to behave in ways that lead to consolidation of power and resources.[10] Resultantly, such organizations have more permeable internal boundaries and the concern for protecting turf is less predominant throughout the organization.

10/ For a more comprehensive explanation of the implications of functional differentiation, functional dispersal, and authority differentiation, see Kraus, op. cit., pp. 163-166.

With greater generalism in organizational functions, more similarities across units, and acceptance of the importance of mutuality of effort, fewer of the internal political barriers to inter-organizational collaboration referred to by Collins (1983) and others exist (Beder, 1984; Fox, et al., 1986; Hohman, 1985; Jones and Barnes, 1984; Nadler and Merron, 1980; Pugach and Allen-Meares, 1985; Sussman, 1982; Weaver, 1979). Since internal structures are more fluid and flexible and internal boundaries more permeable, the system as a whole becomes more "open," a factor noted by Beder (1984) as facilitating inter-organizational collaboration.

The existence of objectives linkages that foster mutual goal attainment thus appears to be associated with a number of inter-related factors that enable an organization to develop a collaborative perspective and thus be more receptive to and capable of collaborating with other organizations.

Comprehensive Preassessment of Valued Commodities As noted earlier, inter-organizational collaboration entails a balanced interchange of valued commodities. It appears therefore that both Dillon (1974) and Weaver (1979) are alluding to another important precondition when they note that it is important for an organization to determine the particular areas of responsibility for which it is qualified to render service as well as consider the advantages and disadvantages of collaboration in relation to the organization's missions and talents. But to regard their findings as fully encompassing this second precondition appears overly simplistic. Merely determining the service an organization can render overlooks the fact that commodities entail more than service. As noted earlier also, commodities include a range of resources, some of which are much less tangible than others. Furthermore, there is a need to determine the relative value of the various commodities a particular organization needs as well as those it possesses. While not directly addressing the question of determining both the types and values of commodities, Collins' (1983) conclusion that political and organizational realities should be uncovered and the organizational culture should be examined alludes to this question as well as raises another -- that of determining the convergence/divergence which exists between organizations. Although Collins was referring more generally to cultural convergence or divergence, determining the relative value placed upon various commodities by organizational units and actors would appear to be fundamental to this process.

Because commodities include both tangible and intangible resources and vary in value to organization, their units and actors, development of a balanced interchange or commodities is a difficult and complex problem. It involves consideration of the types and values of all commodities which may be involved in or affected by an interchange with another organization. Too frequently it appears that organizations assume that collaboration is both desirable and feasible without explicitly assessing the availability, marketability or value of their current stock of commodities. Nor do they consider whether the commodities they need and expect to receive through collaboration are actually available from a potential collaborator. It is these types of concerns to which Hohman (1985) seems to be referring in concluding that the important determinants of collaboration include a perception of gain and possession of sufficient resources.

Given the importance of being able to effect a balanced exchange of commodities, there thus appears to be a second precondition which can increase the capacity of organizations to collaborate. An organization which conducts a systematic and comprehensive assessment of its entire stock of commodities (both tangible and intangible) in terms of their availability for exchange (that is, their value if retained as compared to their value if exchanged) as well as their potential marketability (that is, their value to other organizations and their actors) will be more capable of determining whether collaboration is not only desirable but feasible. Moreover, an inventory of the types and relative values of commodities that are needed to facilitate attainment of organizational goals but are either not currently available or in scarce supply is equally important in increasing the capacity for collaboration.

Organizational Values Conducive to Managing Promotive Interdependence As indicated in the discussion of fundamental attributes, inter-organizational collaboration entails the management of promotive interdependence through a continuously renegotiated pluralistic order. Such an order can only be achieved when structures and processes exemplify collaborative values. Therefore, a third facilitating organizational precondition would seem to be the existence within an organization of values which are conducive to the development of such structures and processes.

The most fundamental of these values is pluralism. Pluralism assumes that more is created because of the interaction of different perspectives and that the whole is greater than the sum of all the parts. Pluralism also entails a recognition that without both individual perspectives and the perspective and consideration of the collective,

something is missing. That is, the whole cannot be considered without considering the importance of the parts to the greater whole.

While pluralism is fundamental to collaboration, it is not the only value which undergirds collaborative structures and processes. Other important values are belief in: power generation (as opposed to power scarcity), problem finding and solving (as opposed to problem covering), participation (as opposed to reliance upon authority), consensus (as opposed to majority or dominant rule), nurturance of individuals in terms of their differences and potential (as opposed to a static, current skill orientation), energy creation (as opposed to energy depletion), tension between freedom and equality (as opposed to suppression of this tension into a hierarchy of authority and competition), and expansion and growth through nonalienating jobs (as opposed to expansion and growth through upward movement in the hierarchy).[11] It appears, however, from the many barriers to collaboration cited in the literature that the values (and therefore the structures and processes) of most schools, institutions of higher education, and state education agencies exemplify more of the opposing values noted above. This thus creates many impediments to the management of promotive interdependence for such management depends upon a collaborative perspective. Resultantly, inter-organizational collaboration often depends upon the emergence of what Weaver (1979) refers to as a new pluralistic subculture with its own cohesiveness and norms for behavior that differ from those characterizing the collaborating organizations. While such sub-systems have been shown to emerge and operate successfully within larger systems which exemplify opposing values, more often than not the problems of maintaining such a sub-system make collaboration impossible to sustain.

Organizations which have pluralism as well as other collaborative values embedded in their structures and processes will thus be more receptive to and supportive of the development of the collaborative structures and processes that are required to manage promotive interdependence.

11/ Again, see Kraus, op. Cit., pp. 129-157 for a comprehensive discussion of these and additional organizational values which exemplify a collaborative perspective.

Institutionalized Environmental Scanning and Strategic Planning Environmental scanning is not only an essential attribute of inter-organizational collaboration but can be an important factor in increasing an organization's capability to collaborate with other organizations. Hohman (1985) points out that environmental changes may increase an organization's inclination to collaborate with other organizations. But trends, issues, and events that occur in the external environment affect organizations in a variety of ways. Thus environmental scanning has become a topic of increasing interest in education as well as in business, industry, and other fields. Many schools, institutions of higher education and state education agencies are realizing that through monitoring the environment they can more systematically identify external conditions that may significantly impact upon their operations. Through continuous monitoring they can project both opportunities and threats posed by external events and develop plans of action for capitalizing upon opportunities and minimizing threats.

Organizations that have systematic procedures for scanning the environment can thus select from various options those which conceivably will enable them to act rather than react and thus more effectively achieve their current missions or undertake different ones. However, environmental scanning is but one component in the overall process of strategic planning. Additionally internal conditions must be examined so that plans and decisions take into consideration not only external forces but organizational factors as well. Thus it is not just environmental scanning but the application of information gained through such scanning within an overall planning process that constitutes this fourth precondition. It is this overall process that both Dillon (1974) and Weaver (1979) may have been alluding to when indicating that the advantages as well as the limitations of collaboration in terms of the organization's missions and talents need to be considered.

Organizations which have carefully examined the potential of inter-organizational collaboration in terms of its role in capitalizing upon opportunities and minimizing threats posed by external trends, issues, and events are able to make more justifiable and acceptable decisions regarding the value of entering into collaborative relationships. In their strategic planning, some organizations may decide that collaboration with other organizations poses more threats than opportunities; others may determine that inter-organizational collaboration is a viable option. However, if a decision to move in this direction is made, it will have occurred within the rubric of an institutionalized planning and decision-making process thus better assuring that collaboration will be an organizational priority.

Administrative Commitment, Knowledge and Support Examination of the fifth attribute of inter-organizational collaboration points very directly to one more organizational precondition that enhances the capability of an organization to collaborate. Also, many of the sources allude to this precondition by noting the importance of commitment and support of top-level administration in initiating and sustaining collaborative endeavors (DeBevoise, 1986; Gabrys, 1981; Lieberman, 1985; Smith, 1975; Wilbur, 1984).

Clearly, if administrative commitment and support is crucial to the enablement of collaborative activities, then organizations in which such commitment and support is present have a greater capacity to develop such relationships than those in which administrative support and commitment is lacking and must be engendered. However, while commitment and support (in terms of action as well as belief) is vital, it does not ensure that organizational units and actors will support or be capable of contributing effectively to the development of collaborative relationships. Nor do commitment and support ensure that other organizational preconditions which facilitate collaboration are present. Administrators are, however, in a position to engender support from units and their actors and to encourage the development of preconditions that facilitate collaboration, but only if they possess the knowledge needed to do so. Administrators thus need to be knowledgeable concerning these preconditions. They must also understand the importance of promotive interdependence, a balanced exchange of valued commodities, a renegotiated pluralistic order, and a multi-faceted enabling framework to inter-organizational collaboration. Otherwise, they may be relatively ineffective in providing the leadership needed to initiate and sustain organizational partnerships.

When top-level administrators demonstrate not only commitment and support but knowledge of the complexities of effecting inter-organizational collaboration, inter-organizational collaboration will be more probable.

Summary

Collaboration between schools, institutions of higher education, and state education agencies can and does occur. Such collaboration may serve a variety of purposes and entail a continuum of both formal and informal relationships. However, for inter-organizational collaboration to be sustained, it must be characterized by five basic attributes. These are (1) promotive interdependence, (2) a balanced exchange of valued commodities; (3) a continuously renegotiated pluralistic order, (4) environmental scanning and adaptation, and (5) a multi-faceted enabling framework.

If one of the purposes to be served by inter-organizational collaboration is the professional development of teachers and other school personnel, the multi-faceted framework must include delivery modes that (1) provide for close and continuous involvement of teachers as well as building level administrators in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of professional development activities, (2) include application and follow-up in ongoing programs, (3) allow ample time for planning and implementation, (4) assure that persons serving as facilitators are competent and acceptable to each participating organization, (5) ensure that conditions under which all participants work are understood and acceptable, and (6) ensure that activities complement ongoing programs in each organization and meet specific needs and concerns of the involved parties.

Schools, institutions of higher education, and state education agencies differ in their capacity to collaborate. Organizational preconditions that increase this capacity include (1) the existence of internal objectives linkages that foster mutual goal attainment on the part of organizational units and actors, (2) the conduct of a comprehensive assessment of the availability and relative value of commodities for interchange, (3) the existence of organizational values that are conducive to the development of structures and processes for managing promotive interdependence, (4) institutionalized processes for conducting environmental scanning and strategic planning, and (5) top-level administrators who possess knowledge of the attributes and preconditions of inter-organizational collaboration as well as demonstrate a commitment to the development of organizational partnerships.

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